REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

I. General Remarks

Please consider the application in view of the following remarks. Applicants thank the Examiner for her careful consideration of this application.

Applicants hereby request continued examination of this application, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.114. Applicants respectfully request that the amendments presented herein be entered, and further request consideration of the claims in light of the amendments and remarks contained herein. The remarks and arguments submitted in the previously-filed response to the Final Office Action (filed April 3, 2007) (hereinafter "the April 3, 2007 Response") are incorporated by reference into this Response. A copy of the April 3, 2007 Response is included with this filing for the Examiner's convenience.

II. Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-38 are pending in this application. Claims 39-68 were canceled in response to a restriction requirement, and claims 7 and 11-38 were withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 have been amended herein. Applicants respectfully submit that these amendments adds no new matter to the application and are supported by the specification as originally filed. All the above amendments are made in a good faith effort to advance the prosecution on the merits of this case.

Claim 1 stands rejected under the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Claims 1-6 and 8-10 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

III. Remarks Regarding Examiner's Objections to the Amendments to the Claims

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner also refused to enter the amendments as presented in the April 3, 2007 Response on the grounds that the amendments requires further search and consideration, and notes that "[t]he amendment to independent claim 1 includes a new limitation reciting the relative permeability modifier to 'abosrb [sic] onto a surface within the subterranean formation' that raises new issues, particularly of new matter . . . ." (See Advisory Action at "NOTE".) Applicants respectfully submit that the specification as filed supports the amendment as presented herein. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner now enter Applicants' amendments to the claims presented herein and consider the remarks presented in their April 3, 2007 Response, as presented in this RCE and Response.

IV. Remarks Regarding Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. With respect to this rejection, the Final Office Action states that:

> Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite an additional step of "allowing the water soluble relative permeability modifier to ***interact with*** at least a portion of the subterranean formation thereby reducing the permeability of at least a portion of that portion of the subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids." There is no written description support for this limitation in the instant specification.

(Final Office Action at 3 (emphasis added).) Applicants have amended claim 1 herein to modify the limitation added in the previous amendment, to instead recite allowing the water-soluble relative permeability modifier to ***attach onto*** a surface within the subterranean formation. Applicants respectfully submit that the limitation provided in this amendment is supported by the specification as filed, as it would be understood by a person skilled in the art. MANUAL OF PATENT EXAMINING PROCEDURE § 2163.02 (2006) ("The subject matter of the claim need not be described literally (*i.e.*, using the same terms or *in haec verba*) in order for the disclosure to satisfy the description requirement."). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request removal of this rejection with respect to claim 1.

V. Remarks Regarding Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-6 and 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by PCT Application Publication WO 03/056130 A1 by Couillet *et al.* (hereinafter "*Couillet*"). With respect to this rejection, the Final Office Action states that:

> Although Couillet may not explicitly disclose the reduction of permeability of "at least a portion of the subterranean formation," because Couillet discloses treating a formation with the same relative permeability modifier (RPM) polymer compound as encompassed by the instant claims and thus possesses the same physical properties/effects, then Couillet is inherently disclosing reducing the permeability of "at least a portion of the subterranean formation" upon the addition of the disclosed RPM polymer compound in the Couillet's method of treating/fracturing a formation.

(Final Office Action at 4.) Applicants respectfully disagree with these rejections because *Couillet* does not anticipate Applicants' claims.

In order to form a basis for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), a prior art reference must disclose each and every element as set forth in the claim. MPEP § 2131. However, *Couillet* does not disclose "allowing the water-soluble relative permeability modifier to attach onto a surface ***within*** the subterranean formation," as recited in Applicants' independent claim 1, as amended herein. In particular, *Couillet* provides that:

> all compounds of the fluid of the invention are blended at surface together with the proppant …when this is subjected to a very high shear rate, the viscosity of this fluid is sufficiently low to allow its pumping downhole. There, the pumped fluid, carrying the proppant, is injected into the formation rocks to be fractured under high pressure. At that time, the fluid is sufficiently viscous for carrying the proppant through the fracture. The fluid then degrades by contact with hydrocarbons flowing through ***the fracture***.

Couillet, page 19, line 34- page 20, line 9 (emphasis added). Thus, the fluid comprising hydrophobically modified polymers of *Couillet* simply flows into the open space of the fracture. *Couillet* does not disclose or suggest any effect on the permeability of the subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids.

Moreover, *Couillet* does not disclose the attachment of the hydrophobically modified polymer to a surface ***within the subterranean formation***. Applicants have amended claim 1 herein to recite that the water-soluble relative permeability modifier attaches onto a surface within the subterranean formation. It is well known in the art that hydrophobically-modified relative permeability modifiers function by adhering to the formation matrix and attaching to adsorption sites on surfaces ***within the porosity of the formation***. *See* U.S. Patent Application Publication 2005/0000694 by Dalrymple *et al.* In order for the hydrophobically-modified relative permeability modifiers of the present application to effect the permeability of the subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids, they must penetrate and attach onto a surface ***within the subterranean formation***. However, because the hydrophobically modified polymers of *Couillet* are present in a viscosified gel structure, they do not penetrate the subterranean formation, nor can they attach onto a surface ***within*** the subterranean formation. As a result, the compositions of *Couillet* do not possess the same physical properties and effects as the compositions of the present application, as described by the amended claims presented herein, because they will not penetrate within the subterranean formation.

For all of these reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claim 1 is not anticipated by *Couillet*. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the removal of this rejection with respect to independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-6 and 8-10, which all depend from claim 1, either directly or indirectly.

VI. No Waiver

All of Applicants' arguments are without prejudice or disclaimer. Additionally, Applicants have merely discussed example distinctions from the cited references. Other distinctions may exist, and Applicants reserve the right to discuss these additional distinctions in a later Response or on Appeal, if appropriate. By not responding to additional statements made by the Examiner, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Examiner's additional statements, such as, for example, any statements relating to what would be obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. The example distinctions discussed by Applicants is sufficient to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph and anticipation rejections.

SUMMARY AND PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME OF ONE-MONTH TO FILE THIS RCE

In light of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections. Applicants further submit that the application is now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicit timely notice of the same. Should the Examiner have any questions, comments, or suggestions in furtherance of the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the attorney of record by telephone, facsimile, or electronic mail.

The Advisory Action states that the deadline for this Response is the later of the deadline for response set in the Final Office Action (April 3, 2007) or the mailing date of the Advisory Action (April 9, 2007). Applicants hereby petition under the provisions of 37 C.F.R § 1.136(a) for a one-month extension of time to file this RCE, from April 9, 2007 to May 9, 2007.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to debit the Deposit Account of Baker Botts L.L.P. Deposit Account No. 02-0383, Order Number 063718.0411, in the amount of $910.00 for the RCE fee of $790.00 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.117(e), and for the fee for the One-Month Petition for Extension of Time to File this Response of $120.00 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.117(a)(1). Should the Commissioner deem that any additional fees are due, including any

fees for extensions of time, Applicants respectfully request that the Commissioner accept this as a petition therefor, and direct that any additional fees be charged to the Deposit Account of Baker Botts L.L.P. Deposit Account No. 02-0383, Order Number 063718.0411.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth L. Durham
Registration No. 59,509
BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
One Shell Plaza
910 Louisiana
Houston, TX 77002
Telephone: 713.229.2104
Facsimile: 713.229.7704
Email: liz.durham@bakerbotts.com

Date: May 4, 2007

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:	§	
EOFF *ET AL.*	§	Group Art Unit: **1712**
	§	
Serial No.: **10/806,894**	§	
	§	Examiner: **FIGUEROA, JOHN J.**
Filed: **MARCH 23, 2004**	§	
	§	
Title: **"PERMEABILITY MODIFYING DRILLING FLUIDS AND METHODS OF USE"**	§	Atty. Docket No: **2001-IP-005267U1P2**
	§	
	§	

MAIL STOP AF
Honorable Commissioner of Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

CERTIFICATE OF FILING ELECTRONICALLY VIA EFS
MPEP 503

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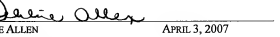

DEBBIE ALLEN APRIL 3, 2007

DATE OF SUBMISSION:
ELECTRONIC FILING (EFS)

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION, MAILED JANUARY 3, 2007

Dear Honorable Commissioner:

In response to the Final Office Action mailed January 3, 2007 ("the Final Office Action"), Applicants submit this response and respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's rejections. Because this response has been timely filed, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue an advisory action if the Examiner does not find the claims to be allowable in light of the amendments and remarks made herein. In response to the Final Office Action, Applicants submit the following:

- **Amendments to the Claims** begin on page 2 of this paper; and
- **Remarks / Arguments** begin on page 6 of this paper.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of reducing the permeability of a subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids during the drilling phase comprising the steps of:

providing a water-soluble relative permeability modifier that comprises a hydrophobically modified polymer, wherein the hydrophobically modified polymer comprises a polymer backbone that comprises polar heteroatoms,

placing the water-soluble relative permeability modifier into the subterranean formation during the drilling phase, and

allowing the water-soluble relative permeability modifier to adsorb onto a surface within ~~interact with at least a portion of~~ the subterranean formation ~~thereby reducing the permeability of at least a portion of that portion of the subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids~~.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobically modified polymer has a molecular weight in the range of from about 100,000 to about 10,000,000.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the polar heteroatoms are selected from the group consisting of oxygen, nitrogen, sulfur, and phosphorous.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobically modified polymer is a reaction product of a hydrophobic compound and a hydrophilic polymer that comprises a polymer backbone comprising polar heteroatoms.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4 wherein the hydrophilic polymer is selected from the group consisting of a cellulose, a chitosan, a polyamide, a polyetheramine, a polyethyleneimine, a polyhydroxyetheramine, a polylysine, a polysulfone, and a starch.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4 wherein the hydrophobic compound is selected from the group consisting of an alkyl halide, a sulfonate, a sulfate, and an organic acid derivative.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 6 wherein the organic acid derivative comprises an octenyl succinic acid; a dodecenyl succinic acid; or an anhydride, ester, or amide of octenyl succinic acid or dodecenyl succinic acid.

8. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the hydrophobic compound has an alkyl chain length of from about 4 to about 22 carbons.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the water-soluble relative permeability modifier is placed into the subterranean formation in a drilling fluid that comprises the water-soluble relative permeability modifier.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the water-soluble relative permeability modifier is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.02% to about 3% by weight of the drilling fluid.

11. (Withdrawn) A method of reducing the permeability of a subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids during the drilling phase comprising the steps of:

providing a water soluble relative permeability modifier that comprises a hydrophobically modified polymer, wherein the hydrophobically modified polymer is a reaction product of:

a hydrophilic polymer that comprises a polyvinylamine, a poly(vinylamine/vinyl alcohol), or an alkyl acrylate polymer, and

a hydrophobic compound; and

placing the water-soluble relative permeability modifier into the subterranean formation during the drilling phase.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11 wherein the hydrophobically modified polymer has a molecular weight in the range of from about 100,000 to about 10,000,000.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11 wherein the alkyl acrylate polymer comprises polydimethylaminoethyl methacrylate, polydimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide, poly(acrylamide/dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate), poly(acrylic acid/dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate), poly(methacrylic acid/dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate), poly(2-acrylamido-2-methyl propane sulfonic acid/dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate), poly(acrylamide/dimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide), poly(acrylic acid/dimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide), or poly(methacrylic acid/dimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide).

14. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11 wherein the hydrophobic compound comprises an alkyl halide, a sulfonate, a sulfate, or an organic acid derivative.

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein the organic acid derivative comprises an octenyl succinic acid; a dodecenyl succinic acid; or an anhydride, ester, or amide of octenyl succinic acid or dodecenyl succinic acid.

16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11 wherein the hydrophobic compound has an alkyl chain length of from about 4 to about 22 carbons.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11 wherein the water-soluble relative permeability modifier is placed into the subterranean formation in a drilling fluid that comprises the water-soluble relative permeability modifier.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17 wherein the water-soluble relative permeability modifier is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.02% to about 3% by weight of the drilling fluid.

19. (Withdrawn) A method of reducing the permeability of a subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids during the drilling phase comprising the steps of:

providing a water-soluble relative permeability modifier that comprises a hydrophilically modified polymer, and

placing the water-soluble relative permeability modifier into the subterranean formation during the drilling phase.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 19 wherein the hydrophilically modified polymer has a molecular weight in the range of from about 100,000 to about 10,000,000.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 19 wherein the hydrophilically modified polymer comprises a polymer backbone that comprises polar heteroatoms.

22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein the polar heteroatoms comprise oxygen, nitrogen, sulfur, or phosphorous.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 19 wherein the hydrophilically modified polymer is a reaction product of a hydrophilic polymer and a hydrophilic compound.

24. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 23 wherein the hydrophilic polymer comprises a dialkyl amino pendant group.

25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 23 wherein the hydrophilic polymer comprises a dimethyl amino pendant group and at least one monomer comprising dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate or dimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide.

26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 23 wherein the hydrophilic polymer comprises a polyvinylamine, a poly(vinylamine/vinyl alcohol), or an alkyl acrylate polymer.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 23 wherein the hydrophilic polymer comprises polydimethylaminoethyl methacrylate, polydimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide,

poly(acrylamide/dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate), poly(acrylic acid/dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate), poly(methacrylic acid/dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate), poly(2-acrylamido-2-methyl propane sulfonic acid/dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate), poly(acrylamide/dimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide), poly(acrylic acid/dimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide), or poly(methacrylic acid/dimethylaminopropyl methacrylamide).

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 23 wherein the hydrophilic polymer comprises a polymer backbone that comprises polar heteroatoms.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28 wherein the hydrophilic polymer comprises a cellulose, a chitosan, a polyamide, a polyetheramine, a polyethyleneimine, a polyhydroxyetheramine, a polylysine, a polysulfone, or a starch.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22 wherein the hydrophilic compound comprises a polyether comprising halogen; a sulfonate; a sulfate; or an organic acid derivative.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 wherein the polyether comprises a polyethylene oxide, a polypropylene oxide, a polybutylene oxide, or a mixture thereof.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 wherein the polyether comprises an epichlorohydrin terminated polyethylene oxide methyl ether.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 wherein the hydrophilic compound comprises a polyether and the weight ratio of the hydrophilic polymer to the polyether is in the range of from about 1:1 to about 10:1.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 19 wherein the water-soluble relative permeability modifier is placed into the subterranean formation in a drilling fluid that comprises the water-soluble relative permeability modifier.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 34 wherein the water-soluble relative permeability modifier is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.02% to about 3% by weight of the drilling fluid.

36. (Withdrawn) A method of reducing the permeability of a subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids during the drilling phase comprising the steps of:

providing a water-soluble relative permeability modifier comprising a homo-, co-, or terpolymer of acrylamide, 2-acrylamido-2-methyl propane sulfonic acid, N,N-dimethylacrylamide, vinyl pyrrolidone, dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate, acrylic acid, dimethylaminopropylmethacrylamide, vinyl amine, vinyl acetate, trimethylammoniumethyl

methacrylate chloride, methacrylamide, hydroxyethyl acrylate, vinyl sulfonic acid, vinyl phosphonic acid, methacrylic acid, vinyl caprolactam, N-vinylformamide, N,N-diallylacetamide, dimethyldiallyl ammonium halide, itaconic acid, styrene sulfonic acid, methacrylamidoethyltrimethyl ammonium halide, a quaternary salt derivative of acrylamide, or a quaternary salt derivative of acrylic acid; and

placing the water-soluble relative permeability modifier into the subterranean formation during the drilling phase.

37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36 wherein the water-soluble relative permeability modifier is placed into the subterranean formation in a drilling fluid that comprises the water-soluble relative permeability modifier.

38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 37 wherein the water-soluble relative permeability modifier is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.02% to about 3% by weight of the drilling fluid.

39-68. (Canceled)

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

I. General Remarks

Applicants respectfully request that the above amendments be entered, and further request reconsideration in light of the amendments and remarks contained herein. Applicants thank the Examiner for his careful consideration of this application.

II. Disposition of the Claims

Claims 1-38 are pending in this application. Claims 39-68 were canceled in response to a restriction requirement, and claims 7 and 11-38 were withdrawn.

Claim 1 has been amended herein. Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment adds no new matter to the application and is supported by the specification as originally filed. All the above amendments are made in a good faith effort to advance the prosecution on the merits of this case.

Claim 1 stands rejected under the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Claims 1-6 and 8-10 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

III. Remarks Regarding Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. With respect to this rejection, the Office Action states that:

> Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite an additional step of "allowing the water soluble relative permeability modifier to interact with at least a portion of the subterranean formation thereby reducing the permeability of at least a portion of that portion of the subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids." There is no written description support for this limitation in the instant specification.

(Final Office Action at 3.) Applicants have amended claim 1 herein to modify the limitation added in the previous amendment, and respectfully submit that the limitation provided in this amendment is supported by the specification as filed. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request removal of this rejection with respect to claim 1.

IV. Remarks Regarding Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-6 and 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by PCT Application Publication WO 03/056130 A1 by Couillet *et al.* (hereinafter "*Couillet*"). With respect to this rejection, the Examiner states that:

> Although Couillet may not explicitly disclose the reduction of permeability of "at least a portion of the subterranean formation," because Couillet discloses treating a formation with the same relative permeability modifier (RPM) polymer compound as encompassed by the instant claims and thus possesses the same physical properties/effects, then Couillet is inherently disclosing reducing the permeability of "at least a portion of the subterranean formation" upon the addition of the disclosed RPM polymer compound in the Couillet's method of treating/fracturing a formation.

(Final Office Action at 4.) Applicants respectfully disagree with these rejections because *Couillet* does not anticipate Applicants' claims.

In order to form a basis for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), a prior art reference must disclose each and every element as set forth in the claim. MANUAL OF PATENT EXAMINING PROCEDURE § 2131 (2005). However, *Couillet* does not disclose "allowing the water-soluble relative permeability modifier to adsorb onto a surface within the subterranean formation," as recited in Applicants' independent claim 1, as amended herein. In particular, *Couillet* provides that:

> all compounds of the fluid of the invention are blended at surface together with the proppant …when this is subjected to a very high shear rate, the viscosity of this fluid is sufficiently low to allow its pumping downhole. There, the pumped fluid, carrying the proppant, is injected into the formation rocks to be fractured under high pressure. At that time, the fluid is sufficiently viscous for carrying the proppant through the fracture. The fluid then degrades by contact with hydrocarbons flowing through ***the fracture***.

Couillet, page 19, line 34- pa ge 20, line 9 (emphasis added). Thus, the fluid comprising hydrophobically modified polymers of *Couillet* simply flows into the open space of the fracture. *Couillet* does not disclose or suggest any effect on the permeability of the subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids.

Moreover, *Couillet* does not disclose the adsorption of the hydrophobically modified polymer to a surface within the subterranean formation. Applicants have amended claim 1 herein to recite that the water-soluble relative permeability modifier adsorbs onto a surface within the subterranean formation. It is well known in the art that hydrophobically-modified relative permeability modifiers function by adhering to the formation matrix and attaching to adsorption sites on surfaces within the porosity of the formation. *See* U.S. Patent Application Publication 2005/0000694 by Dalrymple *et al.* In order for the hydrophobically-modified relative permeability modifiers of the present application to effect the permeability of the subterranean formation to aqueous-based fluids, they must penetrate and adsorb onto a surface within the subterranean formation. However, because the hydrophobically modified polymers of *Couillet* are present in a viscosified gel structure, they do not penetrate the subterranean formation, nor can they adsorb onto a surface within the subterranean formation. As a result, the compositions of *Couillet* do not possess the same physical properties and effects as the compositions of the present application, as described by the amended claims presented herein, because they will not penetrate within the subterranean formation.

For all of these reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claim 1 is not anticipated by *Couillet.* Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the removal of this rejection with respect to independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-6 and 8-10, which all depend from claim 1, either directly or indirectly.

V. No Waiver

All of Applicants' arguments are without prejudice or disclaimer. Additionally, Applicants have merely discussed example distinctions from the cited references. Other distinctions may exist, and Applicants reserve the right to discuss these additional distinctions in a later Response or on Appeal, if appropriate. By not responding to additional statements made by the Examiner, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Examiner's additional statements, such as, for example, any statements relating to what would be obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. The example distinctions discussed by Applicants is sufficient to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph and anticipation rejections.

SUMMARY

In light of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and objections. Applicants further submit that the

application is now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicit timely notice of the same. Because this response has been timely filed, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue an advisory action if the Examiner does not find the claims to be allowable in light of the amendments and remarks made herein. Should the Examiner have any questions, comments or suggestions in furtherance of the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the attorney of record by telephone, facsimile, or electronic mail.

Applicants believe that no fees are due in association with the filing of this response. Should the Commissioner deem that any fees are due, including any fees for extensions of time, the Commissioner is authorized to debit Baker Botts L.L.P. Deposit Account No. 02-0383, Order Number 063718.0411, for any underpayment of fees that may be due in association with this filing.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth L. Durham
Registration No. 59,509
BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
One Shell Plaza
910 Louisiana
Houston, TX 77002
Telephone: 713.229.2104
Facsimile: 713.229.7704
Email: liz.durham@bakerbotts.com

Date: April 3, 2007